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## La Porte Citizens Police Academy graduates latest class



Members of the class included (in alphabetical order) Morris Bryant, Vicky Copley, Lyla DeSouza, Norma Elliot, Rick Guzman, Felicitas Hernandez, Jose Hernandez, David Janda, Susan Jenson, James Kelley, Elizabeth Lainhart, Ramses Macios, Emily McDuffie, Karen Rigby, Abe Rosa, Chuck Rosa, Jane Rosa, Maggie Rosa, Samantha Rosa, Thomas Seals, Debora Spradlin-Dugie, Donnice Thompson, Gwen Tilley, Richard Tilley, and Theresa Wituki. Officer Robyn Gallion, left, served as the police department's class coordinator for the CPA group and was assisted at the graduation ceremonies by fellow LPPD officers Roger Gonzalez, second from left, and Yvonne Stanley. Chief Ken Adcox stands on the far right.

Friday, November 18, 2011 By: Florian Martin

The La Porte Police Department graduated its second group of Citizens Police Academy participants of this year on Monday, Nov. 14.

The department hosted a reception for the group and Chief Ken Adcox presented each of the 25 graduates with an official diploma, recognizing their dedication and accomplishments over the multi-week program. Adcox also expressed his pleasure with the program's continued success. "CPA graduates are more than interested and involved citizens," Adcox said. "They are our partners and we consider them as family." CPA graduate Elizabeth Lainhart called the program "the highlight of her week" and expressed her desire to continue volunteering with the police department, saying that "the La Porte Police Department will be seeing a lot of me."

The ultimate mission and primary focus of the CPA is to bring the police department and the community closer together by educating each other, said LPPD spokesman John Krueger. "The department believes that the goal of establishing a safer community can best be achieved if the police and the community make a positive connection with one another," Krueger said. He said the La Porte Citizen Police Academy is basically a community awareness program geared toward a partnership between the police department and the citizens they serve.

"Most people think police is like what they see on TV," Krueger said. "It's not just driving cars fast and catching the bad guys. Of course that's part of it, but the bigger thing that police does is (community) service." He said people are surprised when they see all the different areas that people work in at the police department, such as crime scene processing and the many different areas of administration. "When you have intimate knowledge of a process, you can appreciate it a lot more," Krueger said. "And people understand that police officers are real people who want to better their community and not just a distant government official."

CPA participants attended classes at the La Porte Police Department every Tuesday night for 14 consecutive weeks, from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. Courses were all taught by police department employees, both certified police officers and civilian employees serving in specialized positions. To supplement the classroom instruction, hands-on training was offered to participants involving 15 areas of police operations, ranging from Special Weapons and Tactics to Community Policing. Participation in the CPA is free and all materials are provided by the police department. Applicants must be at least eighteen years of age with a clear criminal history. That means they can have no convictions for felony offenses, cannot be on probation for any reason and must not have any outstanding warrants. Applicants must fill out an application and undergo a background check prior to the first night of class. The department asks that all applicants live or work in the city of La Porte, although occasional exceptions may be made.

Krueger said CPA graduates will find an abundance of rewarding volunteer opportunities and they also become eligible to participate in the department's "ride along" program where they can experience police patrol first hand. La Porte residents who are not able to attend a CPA class can take advantage of an alternate version of the ride along program and similar volunteer opportunities exist, he said.

The La Porte Police Department has offered two CPA classes per year since the program was reinstated in 2009. Occasionally, the department offers a seven-week advanced course for basic CPA graduates. For questions concerning La Porte's Citizens Police Academy, contact Officer Robyn Gallion at 281-842-3162 or go to the department's website at www.ci.la-porte.us/gov/police/support/default.asp.